



DEPARTMENT OF HOMELAND SECURITY

Coast Guard

33 CFR Part 165

[Docket Number USCG-2023-0685]

RIN 1625-AA00

Safety Zone; Potomac River, Washington, D.C.

AGENCY: Coast Guard, Department of Homeland Security.

ACTION: Temporary final rule.

SUMMARY: The Coast Guard is establishing a temporary safety zone for certain waters of the Potomac River. The safety zone is needed to protect personnel, vessels, and the marine environment on these navigable waters near Washington, D.C. from potential hazards posed by a fireworks display which will take place on October 5, 2023. Entry of vessels or persons into this zone is prohibited unless specifically authorized by the Captain of the Port, Maryland-National Capital Region, or a designated representative.

DATES: This rule is effective from 7:30 p.m. until 9:30 p.m. on October 5, 2023.

ADDRESSES: To view documents mentioned in this preamble as being available in the docket, go to <https://www.regulations.gov>, type USCG-2023-0685 in the search box and click "Search." Next, in the Document Type column, select "Supporting & Related Material."

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: If you have questions about this rule, call or email MST2 Hollie Givens, Sector Maryland-NCR, Waterways Management Division, U.S. Coast Guard: telephone 410-576-2596, email MDNCRMarineevents@uscg.mil.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

I. Table of Abbreviations

CFR	Code of Federal Regulations
COTP	Captain of the Port
DHS	Department of Homeland Security
FR	Federal Register
NPRM	Notice of proposed rulemaking
§	Section
U.S.C.	United States Code

II. Background Information and Regulatory History

The Coast Guard is issuing this temporary rule without prior notice and opportunity to comment pursuant to authority under section 4(a) of the Administrative Procedure Act (APA) (5 U.S.C. 553(b)). This provision authorizes an agency to issue a rule without prior notice and opportunity to comment when the agency for good cause finds that those procedures are “impracticable, unnecessary, or contrary to the public interest.” Under 5 U.S.C. 553(b)(B), the Coast Guard finds that good cause exists for not publishing a notice of proposed rulemaking (NPRM) with respect to this rule because the event sponsors did not notify the Coast Guard of the event in time to allow for a notice and comment period without delaying promulgation of the rule. It would be impracticable and contrary to the public interest to delay the establishment on this safety zone to publish an NPRM because doing so would prevent us from addressing the potential safety hazards associated with the fireworks display. Potential safety hazards include the accidental discharge of fireworks, dangerous projectiles and falling hot embers or other debris.

Under 5 U.S.C. 553(d)(3), the Coast Guard finds that good cause exists for making this rule effective less than 30 days after publication in the **Federal Register**. Delaying the effective date of this rule would be impracticable and contrary to the public interest because immediate action is needed to respond to the potential safety hazards associated with the fireworks display.

III. Legal Authority and Need for Rule

The Coast Guard is issuing this rule under authority in 46 U.S.C. 70034. The Captain of the Port, Sector Maryland-National Capital Region (COTP) has determined that potential hazards associated with the fireworks to be used in this October 5, 2023, display will be a safety concern for anyone near the fireworks discharge sites. This rule is needed to protect personnel, vessels, and the marine environment in the navigable waters within the safety zone before, during, and after the scheduled event.

IV. Discussion of the Rule

The COTP is establishing a safety zone from 7:30 p.m. to 9:30 p.m. on October 5, 2023. The safety zone would cover all navigable waters of the Potomac River within 500 feet of a fireworks barge in approximate position latitude 38° 53' 43.13" N, latitude 77° 03' 30.62" W, located near the John F. Kennedy Center for Performing Arts in Washington, D.C. The size of the zone and the duration of the rule are intended to protect personnel, vessels, and the marine environment in these navigable waters before, during, and after the scheduled fireworks display. No vessel or person will be permitted to enter the safety zone without obtaining permission from the COTP or designated representative.

V. Regulatory Analyses

We developed this rule after considering numerous statutes and Executive orders related to rulemaking. Below we summarize our analyses based on a number of these statutes and Executive orders, and we discuss First Amendment rights of protestors.

A. Regulatory Planning and Review

Executive Orders 12866 and 13563 direct agencies to assess the costs and benefits of available regulatory alternatives and, if regulation is necessary, to select regulatory approaches that maximize net benefits. This rule has not been designated a "significant regulatory action," under section 3(f) of Executive Order 12866, as amended by

Executive Order 14094 (Modernizing Regulatory Review). Accordingly, this rule has not been reviewed by the Office of Management and Budget (OMB).

This regulatory action determination is based on the size, duration, and time-of-day of the safety zone, which will impact a small, designated area of the Potomac River for no more than two hours of total enforcement--hours during the evening, when vessel traffic is normally low. Moreover, the Coast Guard will issue a Local Notice to Mariners and a Broadcast Notice to Mariners via VHF-FM marine channel 16, to inform them about the safety zone.

B. Impact on Small Entities

The Regulatory Flexibility Act of 1980, 5 U.S.C. 601–612, as amended, requires Federal agencies to consider the potential impact of regulations on small entities during rulemaking. The term “small entities” comprises small businesses, not-for-profit organizations that are independently owned and operated and are not dominant in their fields, and governmental jurisdictions with populations of less than 50,000. The Coast Guard certifies under 5 U.S.C. 605(b) that this rule will not have a significant economic impact on a substantial number of small entities.

While some owners or operators of vessels intending to transit the safety zone may be small entities, for the reasons stated in section V.A above, this rule will not have a significant economic impact on any vessel owner or operator.

Under section 213(a) of the Small Business Regulatory Enforcement Fairness Act of 1996 (Public Law 104-121), we want to assist small entities in understanding this rule. If the rule would affect your small business, organization, or governmental jurisdiction and you have questions concerning its provisions or options for compliance, please call or email the person listed in the FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT section.

Small businesses may send comments on the actions of Federal employees who enforce, or otherwise determine compliance with, Federal regulations to the Small

Business and Agriculture Regulatory Enforcement Ombudsman and the Regional Small Business Regulatory Fairness Boards. The Ombudsman evaluates these actions annually and rates each agency's responsiveness to small business. If you wish to comment on actions by employees of the Coast Guard, call 1-888-REG-FAIR (1-888-734-3247). The Coast Guard will not retaliate against small entities that question or complain about this rule or any policy or action of the Coast Guard.

C. Collection of Information

This rule will not call for a new collection of information under the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995 (44 U.S.C. 3501–3520).

D. Federalism and Indian Tribal Governments

A rule has implications for federalism under Executive Order 13132, Federalism, if it has a substantial direct effect on the States, on the relationship between the National Government and the States, or on the distribution of power and responsibilities among the various levels of government. We have analyzed this rule under that Order and have determined that it is consistent with the fundamental federalism principles and preemption requirements described in Executive Order 13132.

Also, this rule does not have tribal implications under Executive Order 13175, Consultation and Coordination with Indian Tribal Governments, because it does not have a substantial direct effect on one or more Indian tribes, on the relationship between the Federal Government and Indian tribes, or on the distribution of power and responsibilities between the Federal Government and Indian tribes.

E. Unfunded Mandates Reform Act

The Unfunded Mandates Reform Act of 1995 (2 U.S.C. 1531–1538) requires Federal agencies to assess the effects of their discretionary regulatory actions. In particular, the Act addresses actions that may result in the expenditure by a State, local, or tribal government, in the aggregate, or by the private sector of \$100,000,000 (adjusted

for inflation) or more in any one year. Though this rule will not result in such an expenditure, we do discuss the effects of this rule elsewhere in this preamble.

F. Environment

We have analyzed this rule under Department of Homeland Security Directive 023-01, Rev. 1, associated implementing instructions, and Environmental Planning COMDTINST 5090.1 (series), which guide the Coast Guard in complying with the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (42 U.S.C. 4321–4370f), and have determined that this action is one of a category of actions that do not individually or cumulatively have a significant effect on the human environment. This rule involves a safety zone lasting only 2 hours that will prohibit entry within 500 feet of a barge within a portion of the Potomac River. It is categorically excluded from further review under paragraph L63(a) of Appendix A, Table 1 of DHS Instruction Manual 023–01–001–01, Rev. 1. A Record of Environmental Consideration supporting this determination is available in the docket. For instructions on locating the docket, see the ADDRESSES section of this preamble.

G. Protest Activities

The Coast Guard respects the First Amendment rights of protesters. Protesters are asked to call or email the person listed in the FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT section to coordinate protest activities so that your message can be received without jeopardizing the safety or security of people, places, or vessels.

List of Subjects in 33 CFR Part 165

Harbors, Marine safety, Navigation (water), Reporting and recordkeeping requirements, Security measures, Waterways.

For the reasons discussed in the preamble, the Coast Guard amends 33 CFR part 165 as follows:

**PART 165—REGULATED NAVIGATION AREAS AND LIMITED ACCESS
AREAS**

1. The authority citation for part 165 continues to read as follows:

Authority:: 46 U.S.C. 70034, 70051, 70124; 33 CFR 1.05-1, 6.04-1, 6.04-6, and 160.5; Department of Homeland Security Delegation No. 00170.1, Revision No. 01.3.

2. Add § 165.T05-0685 to read as follows:

§ 165.T05-0685 Safety Zone; Potomac River, Washington, D.C.

(a) *Location.* The following area is a safety zone: All navigable waters of the Potomac River within 500 feet of the fireworks barge in approximate position latitude 38° 53'43.13 N", longitude 77°03'30.62" W located near the John F. Kennedy Center for Performing Arts, Washington, D.C. These coordinates are based on datum NAD 83.

(b) *Definitions.* As used in this section---

Captain of the Port (COTP) means the Commander, U.S. Coast Guard Sector Maryland-National Capital Region.

Designated representative means any Coast Guard commissioned, warrant, or petty officer who has been authorized by the Captain of the Port National Capital Region to assist in the enforcing of the safety zone as described in paragraph (a) of this section.

(c) *Regulations.* (1) Under the general safety zone regulations in subpart C of this part, you may not enter the safety zone described in paragraph (a) of this section unless authorized by the COTP or the COTP's designated representative.

(2) To seek permission to enter, contact the COTP or the COTP's representative by telephone at 410-576-2693 or on Marine Band Radio VHF-FM channel 16 (156.8 MHz). The Coast Guard vessels enforcing this section can be contacted on Marine Band Radio VHF-FM channel 16 (156.8 MHz). Those in the safety zone must comply with all lawful orders or directions given to them by the COTP or the COTP's designated representative.

(d) *Enforcement period.* This section will be enforced from 7:30 p.m. to 9:30 p.m. on October 5, 2023.

Dated: September 29, 2023.

David O'Connell,
Captain, U.S. Coast Guard,
Captain of the Port Maryland-National Capital Region

[FR Doc. 2023-22166 Filed: 10/4/2023 8:45 am; Publication Date: 10/5/2023]